762 Suicide. All evidence agrees that completed suicide is very rare in Koko society. On the other hand, observation and communications agree that attempted suicide is not a[n] [illegible] occurrence and very likely to appear during menstruation. There is a general pattern for such attempted self-destruction. In the two cases of the sort observed during field work, the weapon selected was a rifle. As he brandishes the weapon the would be suicide announces his intention in an emotional outburst. This becomes the signal for excitement to block the deed. One or more men leap forward to wrest the gun from the intended suicide's possession and toss it out of sight. The would be victim is now usually momentarily overwhelmed by his behavior. This pattern is illustrated by Louis Mbau's behavior during menopause.* Several days during the afternoon Louis had manifested aggression toward himself, crying, "I don't care if I'm killed, I don't care my life." After several hours of such menopausal outbursts interspersed with quarreling and aggression toward his companions, he called for large rubber rifle and threatened to kill himself. Old Mbau threw himself on the gun and as the two men grappled for the weapon, Louis succeeded in firing one wild shot. John Kwa and the ethnographer ran to the camp and together wrestled the gun from the drunken man. John fired the shells in the chamber and Old Mbau wrest the gun half-way down the outback. No punishment or other discrimination is reserved for attempted suicides. The individual is comforted and in the future, while monitored, he is watched less to prevent the attempt.

763 Death. The recognized signs of death are scarcely noticeable breathing, a grasping for breath, and a faltering weak pulse rate. When these actions were completely and the movement of the heart can no longer be felt, the individual is considered dead. As soon as signs of impending death are noticed, it is necessary to summon relatives and friends, who may attempt any medication or assistance which suggests itself to avert life. Attention is also focused on the departing person's last words, which are apt to be remembered for some time. When death is believed to have taken place, one of the relatives feels the person's pulse or heart. If these are absent, the news is circulated to other members of the settlement or community. The nearest kin of the deceased cries from any but the most reserved actions and begin to weep. Friends of the mourners will try to comfort them and bring them out of the depression. "When people feel bad," Old Mbau said, "we try to make them strong." Mourning for death always appears genuine and painful, but others observed did not manifest itself in uncontrollable emotional outbursts.

764 Immediately after the fact of death has been established, two friends or distant relatives, who are of the same sex as the deceased (and otherwise belong to the same moiety), wash the corpse with warm water from head to foot. The body is dressed in clothing as new and as attractive as possible and is finally wrapped in a length of cotton cloth or other material two or five yards long. Away from Lomax from that a gun is for a cotton grass material originally purchased for making dresses. The cloth is laid out on the ground and the body placed lengthwise upon it, face up, the legs stretched stubbornly straight, the arms folded across the abdomen. Excess yardage is allowed to extend beyond the head. The edges of the material are brought over the body, pulled tight and pinned with safety pins. The excess

*For a description and analysis of Edward Mbau's suicide attempt see Montgomery and Montgomery, Suicide, [illegible] Chapter [illegible].

out of the house and rendered after the woman has returned. Otherwise the people would have bad luck.

DEATH, BURIAL and MORTUARY CUSTOMS.

When a person died the death was at once announced to the people, who assembled and immediately commenced to sing a death chant. Only middle-aged and old people joined in the singing of death chants. If young people sang, they were apt to die early in life. The song was sung in presence of the corpse and the latter was addressed in the song. It is said that sometimes when it seemed sure the person was dying the people assembled beforehand and sang the chant at the death bed. The chief and possibly the only object in singing the death chant was to assist the soul of the dead person to find the trail to the spiritual land, and therefore even though the singing of the chant at the time of the death neither then afterwards, gave the all the more chance of easily finding the trail. It is said the beginning of the trail is obscure so hard to find and dead people are liable to have trouble in finding it and sometimes go on the wrong trail or get lost. It seems the change from the state of life to that of death is considered to be sudden and extreme and the soul (especially that of an elderly person) on the being parted from the body is more or less in a state of shock or partly crippled and therefore needs people's assistance.

[illegible] 737

[illegible] 762

[illegible] 763

[illegible] 764

[illegible]